



**TENTH
CONGRESSIONAL
DISTRICT**

REPRESENTATIVE MARK KIRK'S

Healthcare & Retirement Security Report

December 2003



Service by the Numbers

(January 1, 2001-October 30, 2003)

62,005

Constituent Letters Answered

3,693

D.C. Tour & Ticket Assistance

1,103

Votes in the 107th and 108th Congress
(Voting percentage 98%)

600

U.S. Flag Requests

200

Eagle Scout & Gold Award Recipients

92%

Weekends Home in the District,
or on Reserve Duty

12

Weekends Spent on Reserve Duty

Priorities: Retirement Security, Health Care and Veterans

Dear Friends,

I am working in Congress to strengthen our retirement savings, modernize Medicare with a prescription drug benefit, and honor our promise to America's veterans.

Congress passed landmark pension legislation, allowing workers to increase their 401(k) and IRA savings. The law also institutes "catch-up" contributions for working women, enhances pension portability and encourages small business pension plans.

The House recently passed legislation protecting doctors from frivolous lawsuits that are forcing them to leave their practices because they can no longer afford the skyrocketing costs of malpractice insurance.

I won congressional approval to build a new combined Navy/Veteran's hospital for Northern Illinois in North Chicago. This will ensure that our veterans receive the state-of-the-art medical care they deserve.

It is an honor to serve you in Congress. Please contact me if you have issues of concern or need assistance from the federal government.

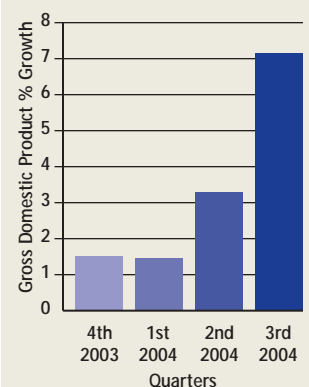
Very truly yours,

U.S. Economy is Growing *Fastest Recorded Growth in 20 Years*

The U.S. economy grew at an annual rate of 7.2% during the last quarter, the fastest growth rate since 1983. Signs of recovery are picking up with many key indicators now showing the U.S. economy is expanding rapidly:

- **New Jobs:** 57,000 new jobs were created in September
- **Consumer Spending:** Increased 6.6 percent
- **Home Sales:** More than 1 million single-family homes were sold through September – the highest rate on record

U.S. ECONOMIC GROWTH



Source: Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics

Retirement Security

Applying the Values of Main Street to Wall Street

To strengthen our retirement savings for hard working Americans, Rep. Kirk voted to toughen criminal laws to prosecute corporate criminals who threatened stock values in America's companies. Congress enacted the sweeping Sarbanes-Oxley corporate crime law, giving federal prosecutors new powers to indict corporate criminals.

The new law requires corporate officers to accurately report their finances *or face tough criminal penalties if they lie*. The penalties include jail time, with ill-gotten gains refunded to defrauded investors. The new law separates accounting from consulting and creates an entirely new set of corporate crimes designed to prevent the kind of scandals that have eroded the public's trust in the stock market.

Enacting a new corporate crime law is not enough. We must also provide the resources to prosecute criminals. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, Congressman Kirk voted for legislation to hire over 800 SEC investigators, backed by \$95 million in new funding. Working with an additional \$35 million for U.S. attorneys, the federal government indicted over a dozen top-level corporate officers on criminal charges. The government's prosecution of these cases will set an example for others who would violate these new corporate crime laws.

Prosecuting Corporate Criminals

The federal government recently indicted these corporate leaders:

1. Sam Waksal, **ImClone** (pled guilty to insider trading, serving 7 years)
2. Dennis Kozlowski, **Tyco** (on trial for grand larceny and enterprise corruption)
3. Andrew Fastow, **Enron** (awaiting trial for accounting fraud)
4. Jack Grubman, **Solomon Smith Barney** (reached a \$15 million civil settlement, lifetime ban from NYSE)
5. Bernard Ebbers, **Worldcom** (awaiting trial for accounting fraud)
6. Ben Glisan, **Enron** (pled guilty to conspiracy to commit wire fraud, serving 5 years)
7. Richard Scrushy, **HealthSouth** (Indicted on 85 counts of fraud, awaiting trial)

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H.R. 743

Social Security Protection Act of 2003

Congressman Kirk supported legislation in the House that strengthens oversight of the Social Security system, bars the disbursement of Social Security benefits to fugitives, streamlines the claims process, and closes loopholes that allow some retirees to collect more than their fair share of Social Security benefits.

Social Security To Go Up 2.1% Next Year

Last Year's COLA: 1.4%

2.1%

Social Security beneficiaries will receive an annual Cost-Of-Living Adjustment (COLA) next year. You can expect a 2.1 percent increase in your benefit payments. If you are a Social Security beneficiary, the increase will start with your January 2004 check.

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H.R. 8

Death Tax Repeal Permanency Act of 2003

Congressman Kirk supported the permanent repeal of the death tax, ensuring that the work of a lifetime is respected by the government.

Congress Increases IRA Contributions

As part of the 2001 Tax Relief Act, Congress passed landmark pension legislation that allows workers to increase their 401(k) and IRA savings limits. For example, savers are now able to contribute up to \$3,000 per year to their IRAs and contributions can reach as high as \$5,000 by 2008. The law made other key reforms such as:

- "Catch-up" retirement contributions for older workers (especially working women),
- Pension portability through reduced vesting,
- Removal of rollover barriers, and
- Incentives for small business pensions.

Under the new law, these reforms will expire in 2010. Congressman Kirk is cosponsoring legislation (H.R. 1612) to make these reforms permanent.

House Passes Reforms to Keep Doctors in Practice

Frivolous Lawsuits Threaten Illinois Obstetricians

No medical relationship is more important than the one between you and your doctor. To keep doctors practicing in Illinois, Congressman Kirk is working to enact protections for doctors amidst skyrocketing insurance costs caused by frivolous lawsuits and outrageous jury awards.

The American Medical Association placed Illinois on its National Warning List due to the exodus of good doctors from our state. Obstetricians, neurologists and emergency room physicians — most of whom have never been sued — are being forced to leave their patients due to the threat of needless million-dollar lawsuits and the risk of an outrageous jury award.

In Wisconsin, insurance for an obstetrician costs \$25,000 a year while in Illinois the same insurance costs over \$100,000. Many Illinois doctors are leaving our state for Indiana and Wisconsin, where doctors are protected from frivolous lawsuits.

Rep. Kirk is an original cosponsor of bipartisan federal legislation to protect all doctors in America by allowing full payments of actual damages along with responsible limits for multi-million dollar non-economic damages. Without such legislation, more Illinois doctors will leave our state, threatening the access of patients to the health care they need.



Congressman Kirk and Dr. Jay Alexander, chairman of Rep. Kirk's healthcare advisory board, speak with a constituent about the rising costs of medical malpractice insurance.

Prescription Drug Update

Both chambers of Congress have passed Medicare Modernization legislation to help seniors pay for their medicine. A final bill has been endorsed by the American Association of Retired People (AARP), but has not yet been enacted. Congressman Kirk voted for the House plan that will dramatically reduce drug costs, but more importantly, **allows seniors to keep their own prescription drug plan if they choose.**

Congressman Kirk is working to ensure passage of this legislation before Congress adjourns for the year.

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H.R. 5

Help Efficient, Accessible, Low Cost, Timely Healthcare (HEALTH) Act of 2003

To improve patient access to health care services and provide improved medical care by reducing the excessive burden the liability system places on the healthcare delivery system.

Our Last Decade of Diabetes?

Congress Increases Biomedical Research Funding

Scientists project that we may be in our last decade of diabetes. Spurred by funding increases for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), federal researchers cracked the code of the human genome and are advancing groundbreaking treatments for diabetes, Alzheimer's, heart disease, Parkinson's and cancer.

Last year, Congress completed the five-year goal of doubling the budget of the NIH, renewing hope for millions of sick Americans. Rep. Kirk is working to ensure that Congress increases NIH funding next year to ensure that researchers have what they need to follow through with new medical breakthroughs.

Contact information for programs helping seniors

Social Security	1-800-772-1213
Medicare, Part B	1-800-642-6930
Illinois Department on Aging	1-800-252-8966
Illinois Circuit Breaker	1-800-252-8966
Comprehensive Health Insurance Plan (CHIP)	1-866-851-2751
Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP)	1-800-548-9034
Veteran's Administration	1-847-578-3700
Civil Service Retirement	1-202-606-1800

Caring For Our Veterans

Congress Backs Plan For a New Hospital at the North Chicago VA

Unique Navy-VA Cooperation

Congressman Kirk pioneered combining our northern Illinois Veterans Hospital with a new Naval hospital to be built at Great Lakes. With approval from Congress, this new facility will ensure that our VA will never close and will be updated with state-of-the-art equipment.

Under the plan, the Navy will build a new \$170 million extension to the North Chicago VA, offering medical care for veterans and active duty personnel.

The Naval Hospital offers specialized treatment in surgery, orthopedics, and joint replacements. The North Chicago VA is now treating active-duty personnel by opening its intensive care unit and mental health unit for Navy families.

This plan will offer better care for veterans and active duty patients while saving the taxpayers' money. "With the war on terror, we have new veterans and this new facility will offer care close to home," said Kirk.

Chicago Tribune

VA Hospital Gets Navy Patients

"This is the first step in what will culminate in a \$170 million joint Navy-VA Hospital venture," said U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), whose 10th Congressional District includes North Chicago.

Kirk helped push legislation through Congress to allow the two departments to share medical services after the VA threatened to shut down the North Chicago facility in 1999. If the 500-bed facility had closed, an estimated 50,000 veterans in Lake and McHenry Counties would have had to travel to Chicago or Milwaukee for health services, VA officials said.

November 8, 2003



Congressman Kirk joined Navy Secretary England, VA Deputy Secretary MacKay, Admiral Ann Rondeau, North Chicago Mayor Bette Thomas and Superintendent Johnnie Allen of the Lake County Veterans Assistance Commission to sign a ground breaking VA-Navy sharing agreement.

Reservists in Congress

Mark Steven Kirk (IL), Roger Wicker (MS), Sen. Lindsey Graham (SC),
John Shimkus (IL), Steven Buyer (IN)
(The Hill/CQ)

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